

Henley, William Ernest  
For England's sake

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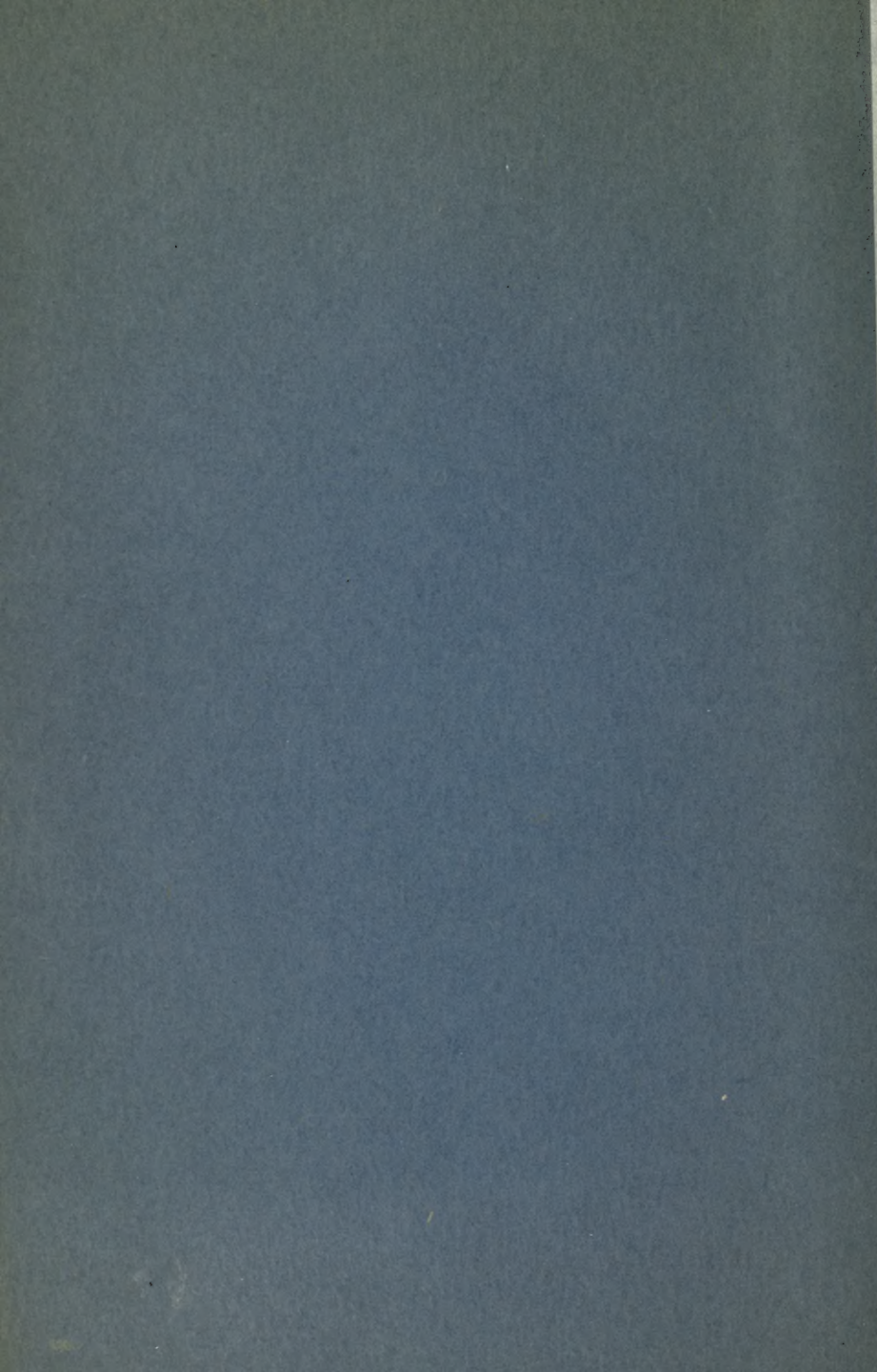




FOR  
ENGLAND'S  
SAKE

W. D. HENLEY

LONDON: DAVID NUTT





*J. H. Cannon*

# FOR ENGLAND'S SAKE

*Verses and Songs  
in Time of War by*

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

*This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,  
Dear for her reputation through the world.*

SHAKESPEARE.


LONDON

*Published by DAVID NUTT*

AT THE SIGN OF THE PHOENIX

LONG ACRE

1900



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I. M.

FREDERICK HUGH SHERSTON ROBERTS, V.C.

LIEUTENANT, KING'S ROYAL RIFLE CORPS

*(Simla 8th January 1872 : Chieveley Camp 16th December 1899)*

AND THE MANY VALIANT SOULS

WHOSE PASSING FOR ENGLAND'S SAKE

HAS THRILLED THE ENDS OF THE WORLD

WITH PAIN AND PRIDE

*June 1900*





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*Verses and Songs*





## PROLOGUE

*When the wind storms by with a shout, and the stern sea-  
caves*

*Rejoice in the tramp and the roar of onsetting waves,  
Then, then it comes home to the heart that the top of life  
Is the passion that burns the blood in the act of strife—  
Till you pity the dead down there in their quiet graves.*

*But to drowse with the fen behind and the fog before,  
When the rain-rot spreads, and a tame sea mumbles the  
shore,*

*Not to adventure, none to fight, no right and no wrong,  
Sons of the Sword heart-sick for a stave of your sire's old  
song—*

*O, you envy the blessed dead that can live no more!*

*March 1891.*

## REMONSTRANCE

## I

## REMONSTRANCE

HITCH, blunder, check—

Each is *a new disaster*,

And it is who shall bleat and scrawl

The feebler and the faster.

Where is our ancient pride of heart?

Our faith in blood and star?

Who but would marvel how we came

If this were all we are?

Ours is the race

That tore the Spaniard's ruff,

That flung the Dutchman by the breech,

The Frenchman by the scruff;

Through his diurnal round of dawns

Our drum-tap squires the sun;

And yet, an old mad burgher-man

Can put us on the run!



## REMONSTRANCE

3

Rise, England, rise !  
    But in that calm of pride,  
That hardy and high serenity,  
    That none may dare abide ;  
So front the realms, your point abashed ;  
    So mark them chafe and foam ;  
And, if they challenge, so, by God,  
    Strike, England, and strike home !

*December 1899.*

## II

## THE MAN IN THE STREET

‘DEATH in the right cause, death in the wrong cause,  
trumpets of victory, groans of defeat’ :

Yes ; and it’s better to go for the Abbey than chuck  
your old bones out in the street.

Life is a march and a battle (there’s some of us make it  
a kind of review) ;

But how if you never get out on parade, and there’s not  
any fighting to do ?

Hands in your pockets, eyes on the pavement, where in  
the world is the fun of it all ?

But a row—but a rush—but a face for your fist. Then  
a crash through the dark—and a fall ;

And they carry you—where ? Does it matter a straw ?  
You can look at them out of your pride ;

For you’ve had your will of a new front door, and your  
foot on the mat inside.

In fact, you've done a pitch for yourself, and it seems,  
but it isn't, a parcel of stuff,  
For nobody knows, nor looks your way, nor cares— but  
*you* know, and that's enough.

‘Death in the wrong cause, death in the right’ : O, it's  
plain as a last year's comic song !  
For the thing is, give us a *cause*, and we'll risk our skins  
for it, cheerfully, right or wrong.

And if, please God, it's the Rag of Rags, that sends us  
roaring into the fight,  
O, we'll go in a glory, dead certain sure that we're  
utterly bound to be right !

*October 1892.*



## III

*PRO REGE NOSTRO*

WHAT have I done for you,  
    England, my England?  
What is there I would not do,  
    England, my own?  
With your glorious eyes austere,  
As the Lord were walking near,  
Whispering terrible things and dear  
    As the Song on your bugles blown,  
        England—  
    Round the world on your bugles blown !

Where shall the watchful Sun,  
    England, my England,  
Match the master-work you 've done,  
    England, my own?  
When shall he rejoice agen  
Such a breed of mighty men  
As come forward, one to ten,

To the Song on your bugles blown,  
 England—  
 Down the years on your bugles blown?

Ever the faith endures,  
 England, my England :—  
 ‘Take and break us : we are yours,  
 England, my own !  
 Life is good, and joy runs high  
 Between English earth and sky :  
 Death is death ; but we shall die  
 To the Song on your bugles blown,  
 England—  
 To the stars on your bugles blown !’

They call you proud and hard,  
 England, my England :  
 You with worlds to watch and ward,  
 England, my own !  
 You whose mailed hand keeps the keys  
 Of such teeming destinies,  
 You could know nor dread nor ease,  
 Were the Song on your bugles blown,  
 England—  
 Round the Pit on your bugles blown !

Mother of Ships whose might,  
    England, my England,  
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,  
    England, my own,  
Chosen daughter of the Lord,  
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,  
There's the menace of the Word  
    In the Song on your bugles blown,  
    England—  
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

*January 1892.*



## IV

## THE LEVY OF SHIELDS

EDWARD the Prince, here in Canterbury Minster,  
Between his deathless Victories, under his triumphing  
shield,

Sleeps these five hundred years,  
Like his archers of Poitiers—

O, the dear, immortal Namelesses of that transcending  
field !

And out in the working world, out in Canterbury  
Barracks,

You hear the drums of England beat, the bugle of  
England blow

Notes of empery that break

Like a song for England's sake

On your dream of the mighty captain that had led you  
long ago.

Yet, if he pass, in his Canterbury Chapel,  
The mortal part of him a strew of venerable dust,  
    With John Chandos and his peers,  
    And the armours of Poitiers,

Still he and his valiant lieges are as fire upon their trust ;  
For—O, the dreadful English drums, the rending  
    English bugles !—

South, and West, and North, and East, on all the winds  
    that blow

    Round the quarterings on the card,  
    Greatly willing, hurrying hard,  
Storms the soul of the Black Prince with all the fury of  
    long ago.

*March 1900.*

## v

## THE CHOICE OF THE WILL

WE are the Choice of the Will : God, when He gave the  
word

That called us into line, set at our hand a sword ;

Set us a sword to wield none else could lift and draw,  
And bade us forth to the sound of the trumpet of the Law,

East and West and North, wherever the battle grew,  
As men to a feast we fared, the work of the Will to do.

Bent upon vast beginnings, bidding anarchy cease—  
(Had we hacked it to the Pit, we had left it a place of  
peace!)—

Marching, building, sailing, pillar of cloud or fire,  
Sons of the Will, we fought the fight of the Will, our sire.

Road was never so rough that we left its purpose dark ;  
Stark was ever the sea, but our ships were yet more stark ;

We tracked the winds of the world to the steps of their  
very thrones ;

The secret parts of the world were salted with our bones ;



Till now the Name of Names, England, the name of might,  
Flames from the austral fires to the deeps of the boreal  
night;

And the call of her morning drum goes in a girdle of sound,  
Like the voice of the sun in song, the great globe round  
and round;

And the shadow of her flag, when it shouts to the  
mother-breeze,  
Floats from shore to shore of the universal seas;

And the loneliest death is fair with a memory of her  
flowers,  
And the end of the road to Hell with the sense of her  
dews and showers!

Who says that we shall pass, or the fame of us fade and die,  
While the living stars fulfil their round in the living sky?

For the sire lives in his sons, and they pay their father's  
debt,

And the Lion has left a whelp wherever his claw was set;

And the Lion in his whelps, his whelps that none shall brave,  
Is but less strong than Time and the great, all-whelming  
Grave.

*July 1891.*

## VI

## MUSIC HALL

## (OLD BURDEN)

*Storm along, John!* Though you faltered at first,  
Caught in an ambush, and held to the worst,  
All the old Counties were hard on the spot,  
For they hadn't a son but rejoiced in his lot.  
You had only to cart 'em some thousands of miles;  
So you fell to your work with the calmest of smiles,  
And, each with her battles, your ships you sent on,  
Till you beggared the record—Hi! *Storm along, John!*

*Storm along, John! Storm along, John!*  
*Frenchman and Russian and Dutchman and Don*  
*Know the seas yours from the Coast to Canton!*  
*Storm along, storm along, storm along, John!*

*Storm along, John!* There was work to be done  
With a foe in full blast ere you'd sighted a gun!  
Came, the news came, that you reeled in the brunt,  
And at home, in a flash, it was 'Who's for the front?'

And your whelps overseas, John—the whelps that you  
knew

For the native, original pattern true-blue—

O, your whelps wanted blooding, they cried to come on,  
And—Hark to them chorusing :—‘ Storm along, John !’

*Storm along, John ! Storm along, John !*

*Half the world’s yours, and the rest may look on,*

*Mum, at the rip from Quebec to Ceylon . . .*

*Storm along, storm along, storm along, John !*

*Storm along, John !* All your Britains are out :

Melbourne and Sydney got up with a shout ;

Wellington, Ottawa, Brisbane, their best

Send, with Cape Town and the riding Nor’-West.

Horses, men, guns for you ! India’s aflame !

How the lads of Natal have been playing the game !

From Gib to Vancouver, from Thames to Yukon,

The live air is loud with you—*Storm along, John !*

*Storm along, John ! Storm along, John !*

*Not in the best of the years that are gone*

*Has the star which is yours thus tremendously shone !*

*Storm along, storm along, storm along, John !*

*January 1900.*

## VII

## A NEW SONG TO AN OLD TUNE

SONS of Shannon, Tamar, Trent,  
Men of the Lothians, men of Kent,  
Essex, Wessex, shore and shire,  
Mates of the net, the mine, the fire,  
Lads of desk and wheel and loom,  
Noble and trader, squire and groom,  
Come where the bugles of England play,  
*Over the hills and far away !*

Southern Cross and Polar Star—  
Here are the Britains bred afar ;  
Serry, O serry them, fierce and keen,  
Under the flag of the Empress-Queen ;  
Shoulder to shoulder down the track,  
Where, to the unretreating Jack,  
The victor bugles of England play  
*Over the hills and far away !*



## TO AN OLD TUNE

What if the best of our wages be  
An empty sleeve, a stiff-set knee,  
A crutch for the rest of life—who cares,  
So long as the One Flag floats and dares?  
So long as the One Race dares and grows?  
Death—what is death but God's own rose?  
Let but the bugles of England play  
*Over the hills and far away!*

*March 1900.*

## VIII

## ‘OUR CHIEF OF MEN’

DID he say to himself, did he say at the start:—‘I’ll  
take this thing in hand,  
And in England’s name, for a dead boy’s sake, I’ll make  
them understand.

‘They have given us war, good war so far as their burgher  
souls knew how :  
In a dead boy’s name, and for England’s sake, I’ll set  
my hand to the plow.

‘They have beaten us, trapped us, foiled and fouled, been  
with us like a disease,  
But as yet they know but the best of the brew ; they  
shall learn the taste of the lees?’

Did he promise thus in the thought of his dead? We  
must do as we must—not will!

If he did, by the Lord he has kept his word, for they've  
had of him thrice their fill.

By the dismal fords, the thankless hills, the desolate,  
half-dead flats

He has shepherded them like silly sheep, and cornered  
them like rats.

He has driven and headed them strength by strength, as  
a hunter deals with his deer,

And has filled the place of the heart in their breast with  
a living devil of fear.

They have seen themselves out-marched, out-fought, out-  
captained early and late.

They've scarce a decent town to their name but he's  
ridden in at the gate.

Desert and distance, treason and drought, he has mopped  
them up as he went,

And only those he must shed in the rush of his swoops  
were discontent.

Patient, hardy, masterful, merciful, high, irresistible,  
just,  
For a dead man's sake, and in England's name, he has  
done as he would and must.

So three times three, and nine times nine, and a hundred  
times and ten,  
England, you, and you junior Englands, all, hats off to  
our Chief of Men !

*May 1900.*



## IX

## ‘A HEALTH UNTO HER MAJESTY’

(MAY 24, 1900)

AUGUST in children, victories, years,  
Grown venerable in storms of cheers,  
Widow and Empress, friend and Queen,  
Resolute, vigilant, careful, keen,  
Ever as fire to find and take  
The only way for your Kingdom's sake,  
True to your course as a star is true,  
Here's to our Sovereign—you, Ma'am, you !

You in whose life are shown in deed  
All the high virtues of the breed,  
All the high qualities of the blood,  
Energy, patience, hardihood,  
Strength in purpose, pride in strife,  
Disdain of death and trust in life,  
Heart to dare and resolve to do,  
Here's to our England—you, Ma'am, you !

Maker of Armies, Builder of Ships,  
Mother of Nations, on whose lips  
The words, 'My People,' shining forth,  
Set in one battle South and North,  
In a glory of steel, with East and West,  
To march and starve with a desperate zest,  
And die in their boots, so they pull things through,  
Here's to our Empire—you, Ma'am, you!

## LAST POST

x

## LAST POST

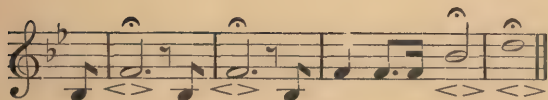
THE day's high work is over and done,  
And these no more will need the sun :  
Blow, you bugles of England, blow !  
These are gone whither all must go,  
Mightily gone from the field they won.  
So in the workaday wear of battle,  
Touched to glory with God's own red,  
Bear we our chosen to their bed !  
Settle them lovingly where they fell,  
In that good lap they loved so well ;  
And, their deliveries to the dear Lord said,  
And the last desperate volleys ranged and sped,  
Blow, you bugles of England, blow,  
Over the camps of her beaten foe—  
Blow glory and pity to the victor Mother,  
Sad, O sad in her sacrificial dead !

## LAST POST

23

Labour, and love, and strife, and mirth,  
They gave their part in this kindly earth—  
Blow, you bugles of England, blow !—  
That her Name as a sun among stars might glow,  
Till the dusk of time, with honour and worth :  
That, stung by the lust and the pain of battle,  
The One Race ever might starkly spread,  
And the One Flag eagle it overhead !  
In a rapture of wrath and faith and pride,  
Thus they felt it, and thus they died ;  
So to the Maker of homes, to the Giver of bread,  
For whose dear sake their triumphing souls they shed,  
Blow, you bugles of England, blow,  
Though you break the heart of her beaten foe,  
Glory and praise to the everlasting Mother,  
Glory and peace to her lovely and faithful dead !

*April 1900.*





## ENVOY

*These to the glory and praise of the green land  
That bred my women, and that holds my dead,  
England, and with her the strong broods that stand  
Wherever her fighting lines are pushed or spread !  
They call us proud ?—Look at our English Rose !  
Shedders of blood ?—Where hath our own been spared ?  
Shopkeepers ?—Our accompt the high God knows.  
Close ?—In our bounty half the world hath shared.  
They hate us, and they envy ? Envy and hate  
Should drive them to the Pit's edge ?—Be it so !  
That race is damned which misesteems its fate,  
And this, in God's good time, they all shall know,  
And know you too, you good green England, then—  
Mother of mothering girls and governing men !*

June 1900.

*MR. HENLEY'S WORKS*



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## MR. HENLEY'S WORKS

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